Beautiful Maidens, Hideous Suitors: Victorian Fairy Tales and the Process of Civilization

Author(s): Laurence Talairach-vielmas

Source: *Marvels & Tales*, 2010, Vol. 24, No. 2 (2010), pp. 272-296

Published by: Wayne State University Press

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/41388956

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at https://about.jstor.org/terms

Wayne State University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Marvels & Tales*

This content downloaded from 63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

LAURENCE TALAIRACH-VIELMAS

Beautiful Maidens, Hideous Suitors: Victorian Fairy Tales and the Process of Civilization

[Y]ou were destined to marry a savage wild beast.
—Apuleius

In many a folktale and fairy tale, women encounter monstrous creatures. Hairy wolves and bears, slimy snakes and frogs, or even ogres partake of the heroines' confrontations with the—male—Other. Following Bruno Bettelheim, psychoanalytical analyses generally posit that beasts function as veiled symbols representing sexuality that children must initially experience as disgusting before they reach maturity and discover its beauty. In contrast to such views, Jack Zipes argues that children's instinctual drives are "conditioned and largely determined through interaction and interplay with the social environment" (*Fairy Tales* 32–33). As a consequence, fairy tales are inevitably shaped by the historical period in which they are published and must be viewed through a sociopolitical lens. Indeed, many historians and literary critics envisage fairy tales as documents marked by social and economic conditions. As Marina Warner argues, fairy tales are permeated with "evidence of conditions from past social and economic arrangements" (xix). For Betsy Hearne, each new version reflects, in addition, "new variations of culture and creativity" (1).[1] Zipes's exploration of the changes made to the tales convincingly brings to light how social pressures and norms, which may vary with time, weigh on fairy tales. His analysis of Perrault's, the Brothers Grimm's, or Hans Christian Andersen's literary fairy tales underlines how the revisions of oral folktales through the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries are fueled by social and cultural references. Thus, hints at bourgeois mores and manners transfigure the discourse of the folktales in order to suit and to strengthen the rising power of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, such revised tales impose standards for sexual and social conduct that hinge on "inhibiting forms of socialization"

Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies, Vol. 24, No. 2 (2010), pp. 272–296. Copyright © 2010 by Wayne State University Press, Detroit, MI 48201.

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

(Zipes, *Fairy Tales* 33). In Zipes's view, throughout the centuries, competition and wealth become keywords, and patriarchal interests increasingly orchestrate the tales, stressing male domination and feminine subjection.

Zipes's interpretation of fairy tales is invaluable to any reader or scholar examining Victorian fairy tales. Unlike in France or Germany—and with the possible exceptions of tales by Charles Perrault and Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy—fairy tales were not generally approved and accepted in England before the beginning of the nineteenth century, especially for children.[2] Despite the fact that the classical fairy tales by Perrault had been translated into English in 1729, it was not before the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century that chapbook versions of Perrault's tales appeared in a format designed to appeal to children. In 1823 and 1826, selections from the Brothers Grimm's fairy tales were translated into English by Edgar Taylor and illustrated by George Cruikshank. Andersen's *Wonderful Stories for Children,* published in England in 1846 and translated by Mary Howitt, because of their overt Christian principles and their suffering (and often mutilated) characters, paved the way for a wider acceptance of fairy tales as suitable literature for children (see Zipes, *Victorian* xvii–xviii). Interestingly, just as fairy tales were making their way into the nursery, they very quickly became a means to question social, political, and cultural issues. Indeed, though mid-Victorian fairy tales undoubtedly represented middle-class settings, protagonists, and codes of conduct, some of them also debunked the bourgeois ideology. Not all literary fairy tales were subversive, however, and many of them seemed to both affirm and denounce the fairy tale's patriarchal discourse, especially when written—or rewritten—by women. In fact, in order to challenge traditional roles, women had to work within cultural paradigms. As shall be seen, the significant aspect of most of them is the transformation and adaptation of the classical fairy tales to the social and cultural environment of mid-Victorian England. As U. C. Knoepflmacher has underlined, Victorian women writers of fairy tales particularly emphasized the links between fairy tales and reality, insisting on "the reality of gender binaries" more than their contemporary male fantasists (25). As a result, their fairy tales frequently have a whiff of morality about them, following the tradition of Maria Edgeworth's children's stories and often resisting fantasy in order to foreground the tales' educational potential.

Through the study of three Victorian tales that depict heroines forced to marry unattractive male lovers—Anne Thackeray Ritchie's "Beauty and the Beast" (1867), Juliana Horatia Ewing's "The Ogre Courting" (1871), and Mary Louisa Molesworth's "The Brown Bull of Norrowa" (1877)—I want to explore how these writers illuminated the fairy-tale discourse on civilization. As Hearne contends, the tale of "Beauty and the Beast," in all its variations, reveals perhaps "more clearly than any other the interweaving of social custom and

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

law with fantasy narratives" (xxi). The three fairy tales under study highlight the bourgeois codes of feminine propriety while at the same time offering their readers a significant perspective on how fairy tales suppress the heroines' agency. Written at about the same period, these three fairy tales are nevertheless very different. One suppresses magic from the narrative in order to adapt a classical fairy-tale plot to everyday Victorian reality; another taps into folklore and seemingly uses matriarchal mythology; the last one borrows both from the matriarchal tradition and from more classical literary fairy tales, conflicting antagonistic discourses to expose gender roles and denounce male oppression.[3] All three narratives testify to the way Victorian women writers rebelled against traditional gender roles even as their tales seem to confirm the conservative civilizing process.

"Beauty and the Beast" Texts in Sociocultural Context

It is probably in the revisions of folktales and fairy tales featuring an animal bridegroom that the models of behavior and incorporated norms and values most reflect how the emerging bourgeoisie stamped their literary fairy tales with the seal of patriarchy. Ironically enough, it is in two rewritings of fairy tales by eighteenth-century women writers that the pressure exerted on little girls to conform to the model of the sacrificial woman is blatant. When Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont reworked Gabrielle Suzanne Barbot de Gallon de Villeneuve's "Beauty and the Beast" (1740) in 1756, she manifestly changed the fairy tale into a moral lesson intended for a young, mainly female audience. Mme de Villeneuve's long romance, published in *La jeune amériquaine, et les contes marins,* was dramatically shortened by Leprince de Beaumont, who, in particular, cut the long descriptions of Beauty's entertainments at the palace and the dream sequences in which a prince and a fairy appeared to Beauty to encourage her not to be deceived by appearances (Hearne 26). Leprince de Beaumont's stories were always written for children, and most of them appeared in English collections such as *The Young Ladies Magazine; or, Dialogues between a Discreet Governess and Several Young Ladies of the First Rank under Her Education* published in four volumes in 1760. Her "Beauty and the Beast" was first published in London, where she worked as a governess for fourteen years, and it was included in an educational book, *Magasin des Enfans; ou, dialogues entre une sage gouvernante et plusieurs de ses élèves de la première distinction.* Stressing the significance of wealth throughout the tale (Beauty's father is a wealthy merchant), and thereby clearly pointing to a middle-class readership, Leprince de Beaumont's tale demonstrates how the evolution of fairy-tale discourse through the centuries follows the development of the bourgeoisie, gradually

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

setting itself apart from the aristocracy. Her Beast is no starving animal, and the tale suppresses the sexual symbolism of the narrative in order to favor manners, figuring a self-abnegating, submissive, and hard-working heroine, who prefers virtue to looks and is soon rewarded by marriage and happiness—that is, wealth.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, British revisions of "Beauty and the Beast" attracted many women writers. Its appeal probably lies in the fact that the story may be viewed as "a female pilgrim's progress," in Marina Warner's terms (277): it deals with the violence of male sexuality, which the heroine must learn to tame—and accept—and which marks the main stage of her education into womanhood.[4] Before focusing on Ritchie's, Ewing's, and Molesworth's revisions of "Beauty and the Beast," I would like to pause here to examine a famous Victorian illustration of the tale. Among the Victorian artists who illustrated "Beauty and the Beast," such as Eleanor Vere Boyle in 1875 or H. J. Ford (in Andrew Lang's *The Blue Fairy Book* [1889]), Walter Crane best illustrates the impact of the social environment on literary fairy tales. Crane firmly believed in the power of images to educate children, and he remains famous today for his numerous illustrations of children's books. Known as the "Academician of the Nursery," Crane illustrated the Charles Perrault stories, traditional English tales, alphabet books, and contemporary nursery stories (Meyer 79–93). As both illustrator and designer, he carefully ornamented his illustrations, frequently using them as a surface on which to project his aesthetic theories. For Crane, decoration, as a reflection of taste, had a moral significance: beauty was linked to design and craftsmanship. Merging the tales for children with his reflections on decoration, his illustrations are firmly rooted in Victorian England and typify how Victorian reality and bourgeois culture suffused the literary fairy tales of the period.

Walter Crane's toy books published by Routledge included a version of "Beauty and the Beast." With its colorful pictures dominating the text, Crane's 1874 "Beauty and the Beast" featured four full-page pictures and a double-page illustration out of the book's twelve pages and truncated the narrative to reduce its motifs to a "utilitarian purpose," in Hearne's terms (42). Inevitably, the stripping down of the text, which kept only the fairy tale's clichéd elements, resulted in a weakening of the characters as well: both Beauty and the Beast are turned into puppetlike figures flattened by Crane's style and his ideas on beauty. The plate representing Beauty and the Beast having tea has frequently been read by feminist criticism as foregrounding the link between woman and creature. The symmetry of the picture, as Beauty and the Beast face each other on the sofa, is broken by the hem of Beauty's dress, which seems attracted to the Beast and conceals feet whose shape is in stark contrast to the

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Beast's cloven hooves. In her study of Victorian representations of women, Nina Auerbach also highlights the significance of complementary colors in the illustration: the red slashes in Beauty's dress, hair, and fan mirror the Beast's red waistcoat and hooves (65). However, the picture is also striking in how the Beast vanishes under fashionable clothes while the flashy bourgeois surroundings, with hints at Japanese decoration, Greek and Renaissance art—revealing, of course, Crane's involvement with the arts and crafts movement—recalls the heavy decoration of mid-Victorian middle-class houses. As Hearne suggests, "There is no wildness in either the setting or the Beast" (43): the Beast's monocle and eighteenth-century French court costume, or Beauty's profiled face, hinting at Greek pottery, turn Beauty and the Beast into fashionable and colorful curios that cancel the tale's potential fierceness. By playing upon conventional postures and decorative clichés, Crane's illustration hence becomes a gaudy surface with little depth. As the characters become flat surfaces, the illustration erases the tale's concerns with sex and marriage to foreground decoration instead. In so doing it highlights much more modern concerns, such as the importance of appearance and class, the visual signs that make the lady and the gentleman.[5] Crane's modern interpretation ironically changes a tale advising readers to read through appearances into a lesson about fashion and decoration, visually encoding woman's role as housekeeper and elegant lady.

The ambiguous reading that the illustration offers, simultaneously suggesting Beauty's wild nature and her relationship with the Beast, on the one hand, and the construction of the Victorian lady, fated to be objectified and sold in marriage, on the other, was developed further in Victorian tales figuring beautiful maidens and hideous suitors. Crane's illustration of the Beast's palace as a gilded cage for Beauty is therefore a significant standpoint from which to view the representation of bourgeois mores, values, and tastes in Victorian fairy tales. In Anne Thackeray Ritchie's "Beauty and the Beast," Juliana Horatia Ewing's "The Ogre Courting," and Mary Louisa Molesworth's "The Brown Bull of Norrowa," the three heroines must marry monstrous bridegrooms. Revealingly, in Crane's illustration as in the three narratives, the social and cultural environment plays a key role, as we shall see.

Anne Thackeray Ritchie: The Tensions of a Conservative

Anne Thackeray Ritchie (1837–1919) was an essayist, a novelist, and a biographer. Most of her essays were initially published in the *Cornhill Magazine,* first edited by her father, as were her novels, short stories, and fairy tales. The latter were collected in *Five Old Friends and a Young Prince* (1867) and *Bluebeard's Keys and Other Stories* (1874). Ritchie was particularly interested in the female literary tradition, as her essays suggest, such as *A Book of Sybils: Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Opie,*

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Miss Edgeworth, Miss Austen (1882). Most importantly, as underlined in *Toilers and Spinsters, and Other Essays* (1874), Ritchie was much concerned with the social condition of Victorian women and the few choices offered to women outside marriage. Her fiction problematizes the importance of marriage in women's lives. Her tales often contrast the fate of spinsters with that of married women, using spinsters as narrators spinning stories of marriage, as exemplified by her recurrent narrator, Miss Williamson. In fact, neither conformist nor radically feminist, her writings display constant tensions, as Manuela Mourao has convincingly shown ("Negotiating"). Through a "delicate balance" (Mourao, "Delicate Balances" 78), she systematically appears to subscribe to portraits of exemplary women while hinting at women's economic dependence on men. In fact, Ritchie's fairy tales are very good instances of the slow evolution of a feminine literary discourse in British fairy tales. This fact probably needs to be related to the weight of puritanism induced by the evangelical revival at the beginning of the nineteenth century and still visible in the multiplication of the conduct books that advocated strict codes of conduct throughout the Victorian period. Indeed, even if the most famous Victorian fairy tales appeared to subvert and denounce the civilizing process, fairy tales and fantasies, such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), George MacDonald's fairy tales, or Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses* (1874), nonetheless offered bleak pictures of children's—and most especially little girls'—education (see Talairach-Vielmas). As a matter of fact, the depiction of their heroines' metamorphoses were not far removed from the projects for discipline to be found in nineteenth-century child-rearing manuals and their "medieval restraining devices," such as orthopedic devices designed to harness children at their desks and in bed (Tatar, *Off with Their Heads!* 88–90). Thus, if discipline and coercion partook of the "civilizing" process and were key words in child-rearing manuals, they were also particularly manifest in conduct books for young ladies who were "positioned as targets of disciplinary intervention that would mold them for subservient roles" (96) as well as in many Victorian fairy tales.

Ritchie's ideal women are neither totally passive and male-dependent creatures nor self-assertive, independent women. Mourao suggests that Ritchie's indictment of the Victorian idealization of marriage is essentially apparent in the way Ritchie revisited her stories, frequently writing sequels to her earlier stories.[6] Mourao does not deal with Ritchie's revisions of fairy tales, which, I would suggest, may serve to explore further Ritchie's critique of marriage. Literary critics have often dismissed Ritchie as a poor plotter and as a writer more interested in descriptions and feelings than in action, or relying too much on her own personal experience for invention (Gérin 127). To see her rewritings of fairy tales as reflections of her "lack of inventive power" is perhaps too reductive, however (127). Indeed, because the fairy-tale genre overtly hinges

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

upon marriage—promising, as it does, women happiness if they conform to the feminine ideal and accept their dependence on men—it becomes an ideal vehicle for Ritchie to voice her opinion through a reworking of the tale. The use of the fairy-tale genre allows Ritchie to focus on the marriage plot she seemed to be at pains to come to terms with—the better to transform and adapt it to the world of Victorian reality.

Ritchie knew classical fairy tales fairly well and had even translated and written an introduction to d'Aulnoy's fairy tales. By choosing to rewrite fairy tales, Ritchie was not just aware of using a literary genre peppered with *moralités* and meant to train little girls into decorous femininity, but she also deliberately borrowed from a genre grounded in rewriting. In her 1892 introduction to *The Fairy Tales of Madame d'Aulnoy,* Ritchie stresses the extent to which the *Cabinet des Fées* drew from other sources and underlines how many of d'Aulnoy's tales were "taken with scarce any variation from the *Pentamerone* of Basile and the *Nights* of Straparola. . . . Straparola himself [having] borrowed largely from preceding authors" (Ritchie, *Fairy Tales* xx–xxi). The aim of these authors and authoresses, therefore, was rather "to conjure up the old [fairies] with new dresses and decorations, just as our pantomimes do every Christmas" (xxi). Significantly, not only were Ritchie's rewritings of classical fairy tales aimed at an adult audience,[7] but her transpositions of the tales into Victorian everyday reality were also probably meant as an ironical juxtaposition of the ideal and the real.

In fact, though the stories seem conventional, Ritchie's rewritings often liberate her comments on marriage. Ritchie frequently used frightening or ugly suitors, such as in "Bluebeard's Keys" or in "Riquet à la Houppe."[8] But like Walter Crane's Beast, Ritchie's hideous suitors often have no wildness about them. Her "Beauty and the Beast," opening her *Five Old Friends and a Young Prince* (published as *Fairy Tales for Grown Folks* in America),[9] highlights middle-class interests and bourgeois mores and manners, pointing out Ritchie's exploration of Victorian domestic ideology. Revealingly, Ritchie cancels all magic from the narrative. Her Beast, as represented in one of the two illustrations in the *Cornhill,* is more clumsy than threatening, as he smashes crockery when the button of his coat catches in the fringe of a cloth spread upon the sideboard. Mr. Griffiths is a "selfish beast" or "brute" (Ritchie, "Beauty" 84)—in fact, a man who has no taste for society life and social obligations, appearing, thereby, "uncouth and uncivilized" (104). Ritchie's reworking and her transposition of the classical fairy tale into the Victorian modern world thus makes clear that the Beast—as defined by Beauty's two vain sisters—is the man who is not fashionable enough to figure in society gossip columns, the man whose happiness depends upon "tailors and hair-oil" (125)—the makers of the gentleman in Victorian England

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

(see Breward). Yet Griffiths is neither monstrous nor threatening, and his power is exclusively economic. Indeed, Griffiths is a member of the wealthy commercial middle classes, and his money is the magic aid that transforms him into the ideal suitor despite his manners and appearance. The bourgeois cult of money is foregrounded throughout; Ritchie does not even need to change Griffiths into a better-looking husband to secure her heroine's happiness. This is perhaps the most significant element of the plot, which hinges upon a stock market crash.

Ritchie's Beauty is a prototypical middle-class young lady, living in the heart of industrial England and experiencing the ups and downs of the share market. Belinda is the daughter of old Barly the stockbroker, soon bankrupt. She is contrasted with her sisters, one of whom, Fanny, is "fond of fashion, flirting, and finery" (90), while the other, Anna, is well bred in the deals going on in the city and knows at what premium some shares are held in the market. Consumerism and speculation are at the heart of Ritchie's narrative. Belinda's two sisters are two sides of the same coin, making money the ruler of this modern world. When their wealth vanishes as though by magic—in other words, through unwise speculation—the journey down the social ladder does not distress Ritchie's Beauty, who, to cheer her father up, uses her own wardrobe to improve the decoration of the house. Belinda makes curtains for her father's room with her dress and decorates the four-poster bed with her own blue ribbons. Ritchie's rewriting of female industriousness and humility is revealed in this portrait of a modern decorator. With "her sleeves tucked up, and her dress carefully pinned out of the dust," Belinda stands on a chair, "hammer in hand" (99). The significance of interior decoration reinforces the bourgeois connotations of the revised fairy tale. If Ritchie's Beauty does not trust good looks nor revere fashionable appearances, through these decorative tasks she is nevertheless constructed as a Victorian lady, who exemplifies the type of domestic activity advocated in Victorian conduct books, such as Mrs. Ellis's *The Daughters of England* (1842).

Preaching woman's self-abnegating role, conduct books advised women never to be idle and to exercise their "female hand[s]" (Ellis 79) through stitching as much as exercise for the mind—albeit practiced with economy. Ellis's praise of domestic activity and industriousness, or of the cultivation of moral beauty and "habitual cheerfulness" (250), appears throughout Ritchie's tale. Like Ellis, Ritchie foregrounds the significance of her heroine's disinterestedness and simplicity, and banishes selfishness, affectation, vanity, and artifice. In Ellis's conduct book, society becomes a means of exercising sympathy for "the diffident, the unattractive or the neglected" (267)—not a place of self-exhibition. Fashion is regarded, thus, as a foe to moral beauty. Ellis's conduct book brings into play interesting issues concerning the construction of the fem-

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

inine ideal, at a time when the Angel in the House, fashioned after Coventry Patmore's passive and submissive ideal, increasingly appeared as a commodity of material culture displayed alongside other artworks in the bourgeois home. As a matter of fact, the Victorian feminine ideal was poised between contradictory discourses that the rise of capitalism brought to climactic excess. As Britain changed into an industrial urban economy, the middle classes multiplied etiquette and conduct books that would define clear-cut gender constructions and safely frame the Victorian woman. No longer solely seen as a child-rearing figure, the ideal wife was reshaped into a perfect lady—"ornamental, leisured, and expensive" (Loeb 20)—who nonetheless walked the streets of the metropolis unchaperoned to go shopping, thereby stepping out of the sancrosanct private sphere of the home. Victorian middle-class women oscillated between commodities—thus mere reflectors of male power, exhibiting their fathers' or husbands' economic success—and dangerously desiring and consuming subjects, hence the urge to educate young girls to abide by the codes of patriarchy (Talairach-Vielmas).

Advice of the type to be found in such training manuals for girls in the vein of Mrs. Ellis's resonated in Victorian reworkings of classical fairy tales. However, women writers in particular seemed to exhibit an ambivalent attitude through works that "both affirmed and subverted Victorian patriarchy" (Mourao, "Delicate Balances" 73). Since the literary fairy tale was a genre based on acculturation, the revision of classical fairy tales offered many women writers a means to exhibit a "socially acceptable feminism" (75): their revisions did not so much challenge patriarchal gender ideologies; rather, they reshaped the fairy tale as a behavioral lesson, the better to endorse *and* expose the socializing discourse of the fairy tale. Hence, Ritchie's Beauty's involvement in home furnishing both defines her as a Victorian Angel in the House and suggests her resourcefulness and potential autonomy, as the hammer suggests. Interestingly enough, in the *Cornhill* illustration, Belinda is standing on a chair by the window so as to hang the curtains. A maid stands in the middle of the illustration, holding the curtains and the hammer. The latter is strategically placed at the heart of the picture. Though very small, the hammer is central as a representation of Ritchie's discreet feminism—her vindication of female autonomy and independence—illustrated here through the portrait of a modern decorator, who does not challenge patriarchal gender ideology.

As the tale continues to respin magic as speculation and blind investment, Beauty's sisters' wishes are rewritten as fashionable accessories, from "a blue alpaca, and a white grenadine, and a pink sou-poult" to "a new umbrella, house-agent's list of mansions in the neighborhood of Capulet Square, the *Journal des Modes,* and the *New Court Guide*" (Ritchie, "Beauty" 107). The wishes of the

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

two vain sisters are in keeping with Ritchie's modern revision: linked to fashion, associated with new dyes and new mixed textiles, such as alpaca, the wishes construct the two sisters as stereotypical middle-class ladies dressed in the modern style.[10] Predictably, Beauty's father stays at the Beast's palace, gathers a rose for his daughter, and is caught red-handed by Griffiths, who hates having his roses broken off and not cut with a knife. To compensate for his loss, Griffiths offers to hire Beauty as his mother's companion so that she may clear off her father's debt in about twenty years.

The heroine, praised for her humility and industriousness, matches up to the Victorian ideal of the Angel in the House. Simultaneously, she is constructed as a highly valuable prize the Beast thirsts for, as in Crane's illustration. In his dream, Griffiths sees Belinda as a priceless piece of property and aligns her with gildings and draperies, pictures and gold cups. By giving access to the male character's unconscious and reversing Beauty's dream sequences, as in Madame de Villeneuve's original fairy tale, Ritchie underlines the relationship between desire and consumption. Ideal femininity is constructed in materialistic terms, and so is male desire. Ritchie's reference to wealth and consumerism thus marches hand in hand with her effacement of sexuality. Woman, as an object that can be purchased, turns (marriage) consummation into male consumption. Once again, Walter Crane's illustration endorses this construction of Beauty. His emphasis on Beauty's Grecian profile (Crane believed that children preferred two-dimensional to three-dimensional representations in order to focus on symbolical meanings [Meyer 88]) erases Beauty's erotic/beastly potential to turn her into a highly ornamented curio. Just like the tiger's pelt in the foreground, woman's beastly nature has been domesticated and turned into a decorative item.

Ritchie's palace, with marble columns and draperies, Dutch pictures of games, or silver chandeliers, reinforces even more the bourgeois atmosphere. In Beauty's bedroom, "an Indian carpet, and pretty silk curtains, and comfortable chintz chairs and sofas, upon which beautiful birds were flying and lilies wreathing" ("Beauty" 127) form the decoration of Beauty's gilded birdcage. A bookcase and a piano also point to the middle-class woman's accomplishments. Revealingly, once in the Beast's mansion, Beauty can only be enchanted by her surroundings. For wealth *is* enchanting, as Ritchie suggests. This is why, while Leprince de Beaumont's tale uses magic to depict the power of the Beast (Beauty sees her father in her magic mirror; she magically finds herself in her father's house on the following morning; she goes back to the Beast's castle through a magic ring), in Ritchie's tale no magic mirror is needed to perceive social differences and Belinda's father's fall: "she could imagine it for herself, alas! without any magic interference" ("Beauty" 129). As in the classical fairy tale, Belinda is

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

allowed to visit her father after a while and stays longer than promised. But when she sees Griffiths lying dead in the kitchen-garden in her dreams, she decides to leave her father to save her lover, only to find that Griffiths has, indeed, fallen asleep, but from mere boredom. She kisses him, playing the part of Prince Charming rescuing his Sleeping Beauty, while Griffiths remains ugly and shaggy.

As suggested above, Ritchie's "Beauty and the Beast" significantly suppresses all magic from the narrative. Of course, the transposition of the classical fairy tale into the Victorian modern world highlights how fairy tales displace the real and cloak dominant discourse as "magic." But Ritchie's rewriting may not be as conservative as it first appears. If the modern reshaping of the fairy tale foregrounds standards for social and sexual conduct, just like classical fairy tales, these are seen through an ironical lens, thus inviting the reader to embark upon a literary journey. To a certain extent, the reader is positioned like Belinda, who comes of her own free will to the Beast's castle and is hired to read and write for Mrs. Griffiths. Ritchie's heroine, who finds a book of fairy tales and a copy of F. T. Palgrave's *Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language* (1861) on her writing table, seems to try to decode reality through reading and deciphering old texts. On the one hand, the book of fairy tales recalls Miss Williamson's claims at the opening of the tale that romance and reality are irreconcilable. On the other, the *Golden Treasury,* in which Griffiths has scored verses and erased the dedicatee in order to encrypt his feelings, reminds us of the traditionally romantic closure of fairy tales. The books turn Ritchie's marriage plot into a textual teaser. Between the spinster's rejection of the "happily ever after" narratives and the Beast's collection of tales for Beauty, the reader is left, like Belinda, to interpret the lines and decode Ritchie's perception of the marriage plot. The closure of the story might help us here. Her Beast never changes into a handsome prince as a reward for her heroine's exemplary manners. As a result, Ritchie's revision illuminates the subversive potential of the fairy tale and its ability to discreetly debunk ideologies. In so doing, Ritchie reappropriates the fairy-tale motifs and plot patterns for feminist claims: under its conservative trimmings, her fairy tale does point out women's limited choices outside marriage.[11]

Juliana Horatia Ewing: The Heroine as Clever Housewife

In a similar remodeling of folktales and fairy tales, Juliana Horatia Ewing plays on the figure of the ogre as a bridegroom and points to the horror of women's arranged marriages. Like Ritchie, Ewing lays particular stress on women as a good—or bad—investment. But "The Ogre Courting" more overtly inverts the patriarchal ideology of classical fairy tales, thereby voicing a feminist protest.

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Juliana Horatia Ewing (1841–1885) was a Victorian fairy-tale writer who frequently revived the tradition of the old female teller. In the 1870s and 1880s, Ewing was among Britain's most popular children's writers, and her works were praised by Alfred Lord Tennyson, John Ruskin, and Jean Ingelow. Her stories, collected as *Mrs. Overtheway's Remembrances* (1869), *The Brownies and Other Tales* (1870) and *Lob Lie-by-the-Fire, and Other Tales* (1873), appeared both in Charlotte Yonge's *Monthly Packet* and—mostly—in *Aunt Judy's Magazine*. Though written for children, Ewing's works combine didacticism with a sophisticated irony that makes them appealing to adults; they praise industry and generosity, but they also contain mischievousness and display a taste for rebellion. Her experimental fairy tales, in particular, convey social criticism and illustrate how Ewing fully grasped the social relations and conditions in a fast-changing society. In most of them, fantasy acts as a means to refract the bleak aspects of women's lives, as in "Christmas Crackers" (1869–1870), in which a young widow dreams she is married to Bluebeard, who threatens her life by waving a scimitar over her head.

In her late collection of fairy tales, *Old-Fashioned Fairy Tales,* published in 1882 (a collection of eighteen tales originally published in *Aunt Judy's Magazine*), Ewing explains how most household stories originally belonged to the oral tradition and that, therefore, "in these household stories . . . the thing most to be avoided is a discursive or descriptive style of writing . . . they should be written as tales that are told" (vi). Ewing does not add contemporary references to her narratives nor does she displace folktales or fairy tales into modern settings, preferring instead to rework traditional oral tales. In "Amelia and the Dwarfs" (1870), Ewing rewrites an Irish fairy tale and associates the oral tradition the tale draws upon with matriarchal mythology. Ewing indeed foregrounds her indebtedness to her female ancestors' storytelling: the story comes from the narrator's godmother's grandmother's grandmother and revisits "Wee Meg Barnileg and the Fairies," the story of a willful little girl who is policed into keeping her tongue still and domesticated into dutiful and self-abnegating femininity. However, in *Old-Fashioned Fairy Tales* Ewing claims that the title of the collection may be misleading, for her tales are not "old fairy tales told afresh" (v). As her sister explained to the readers of *Aunt Judy's Magazine* after Juliana Horatia's death, Ewing's stories were very much influenced by some of the books she had read, such as the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, or Ludwig Bechstein's fairy tales (H. Gatty 537). Some of her own tales, published in her mother's *Aunt Judy's Letters,* such as "The Smut," "The Crick," and "The Brothers" were even written "in imitation of Andersen" (548). In *Old-Fashioned Fairy Tales* "The Magician's Gifts" and "The Little Darner" respectively show more familiarity with the classical "Sleeping Beauty" and "Tom Thumb" than with oral folklore. This conflation of oral and written traditions is significant

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

and explains why bourgeois mores and manners may be decoded in many of Ewing's fairy tales, as I shall demonstrate.

The fear of being devoured, which appears in many versions of "Beauty and the Beast" as Beauty enters the Beast's palace, is to be be found as early as in Apuleius's "Eros and Psyche."[12] As Maria Tatar points out, the Beast and Bluebeard are two faces of the same coin: one is "a beast in all but the literal sense of the term," the other, "a beast in all but the figurative sense of the term" (*Hard Facts* 156).[13] Eros and other hideous lovers are often associated with the figure of the ogre. However, unlike animal bridegrooms, Bluebeards and ogres do not become handsome princes, which stresses even more women's predicament in a male-dominated world. In traditional animal bridegroom tales the man is portrayed as a predatory animal because he needs to be domesticated; the woman, for her part, is highly civilized. As we have seen, Ritchie's Beast is clumsy, breaks the crockery, and is not used to ladies' society. But as he must quickly appear as a gentleman without resorting to magic, he is shown to have refined tastes, cuts roses with a knife, does not lack intelligence, and belongs, of course, to the wealthy middle classes. In her reusing of folktale motifs and playing upon the figure of the ogre, Ewing's representation of man is even more uncivilized. The figure of the ogre appears in two tales of her collection of "old-fashioned" fairy tales: "The Little Darner" and "The Ogre Courting." The two narratives are very different, even though both heroines outwit the monstrous creature.[14] In "The Ogre Courting" the figure of the ogre is no monstrous image of devouring as a metaphor of sexual union; the heroine's admirable domestic management serves as a means of circumventing male power. Significantly, the gigantic ogre is a monstrous representation of accumulation of wealth, a creature who collects wives just like Perrault's Bluebeard.

As Zipes explains, Perrault's tales were published at a time when the nature and place of women in society were being discussed. As a result, the seventeenth-century literary fairy tale does interrogate woman's place in family and society, as evidenced by the focus on women, most particularly their difficult situations when in the hands of powerful men. Hideous suitors—whether Bluebeards or beasts—increase the tales' engagement with women's plight, positing women's limited choices. Zipes's study of Perrault's "Bluebeard" is particularly relevant to this discussion. Zipes draws on Philip Lewis's analysis of the tale and his contention that "the secret of 'Bluebeard' is that there is no secret" (Lewis, qtd. in Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick* 161): the tale hinges indeed upon the arbitrariness of male power and reveals "more fissures and anxieties in the ritual of phallocratic secrecy than ever before in Western history . . . only through manipulation and calculation . . . can [men] convince women to reconcile themselves to domesticity and inferiority" (164).

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

As suggested, Ewing's tale oscillates between the oral tradition and a more literary tradition. In fact, I argue, Ewing seems to use folktale motifs to underscore the latent discourse of more classical fairy tales. Through accumulating "heavy ransoms from merchants too old and tough to be eaten" (*Old-Fashioned* 57), the ogre has become immensely rich. His storing of goods and riches works in tandem with his collecting wives, as he constantly looks for fresh little women to appease his greed. Whether he actually eats his wives is not clear, however. He may eat them, torment them, or work them to death, choosing especially little women and good housewives. Domestic criteria efface sexual frankness in the marital ritual. For the ogre hardly understands household management and the tale rests on Managing Molly's good housekeeping. The focus on the ogre's many wives recalls Perrault's "Bluebeard," a tale Ewing often resorted to, as in "Christmas Crackers," for instance, as already noted. Yet, by choosing to allude to folklore and to transform the figure of the ogre into an image of man as an undomesticated animal who needs woman's help, Ewing brings to the fore the anxieties lying beneath the surface of Perrault's tale. Indeed, Ewing does not just draw upon figures of clever women from oral tradition (folktale heroines are generally more active and resourceful than the heroines of classical fairy tales, hence the frequent association of folktales with matriarchal discourse, as we will see further on); her use of the figure of the ogre is significant as well: the ogre is a magical creature—his power, illustrated by his giant size and appetite, is linked to the world of marvels and beliefs. Consequently, the male character's power cannot be merely explained away—just like patriarchal ideology. Hence, Perrault's phallocratic discourse in "Bluebeard" and "the secret of the nonsecret" (Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick* 165)—the idea that men's superior power is groundless—is recast here through the figure of the magical creature, whose power mysteriously comes and goes. Ewing's heroine, more in the vein of the brave and witty female characters of the oral tradition, debunks male power and subverts woman's subservience to men.

The ogre chooses Managing Molly, a poor farmer's daughter, because she can "manage" domestic resources. Managing Molly is so thrifty that her father need not provide a dowry. On the contrary, the ogre must offer her father some financial compensation for his loss. Being a low-cost wife, Managing Molly asks for a new farm and a feather bed of fresh goose feathers instead of fine dresses and jewelry. The ogre works so hard to save the expense of labor that he eventually goes off and refuses to marry her. So Managing Molly demands to be compensated for the loss of a husband: she gets the farm and all the ogre's geese to make a new feather bed. Managing Molly, now well dowered, soon finds a husband while the ogre has lost part of his power through the experience.

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Obviously, though Ewing's tale may foreground the typically bourgeois obsession for money through the monstrous figure of the greedy ogre, Ewing reverses the Victorian stereotypes of the extravagant wife and the reasonable husband trying to tame his wife's uncontrollable nature. Relying on folklore, Ewing rewrites the fairy-tale heroine as a clever housewife and casts the man into the role of the Beast, who hardly understands household management. Her tale thus reuses folklore material for feminist claims, teaching little girls not to feel threatened by patriarchal power. Through the figure of the monstrous man amassing money, Ewing liberates her critique of materialist culture, offering her heroine independence and autonomy as she freely chooses a husband among the many offers provided by her new wealth. As Marina Warner suggests, Managing Molly's ability to keep her dowry may have been a hint at the social climate that led to the passing of the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882, gradually allowing women to keep their money after their husband's death (267). Ewing's reversal of gender expectations hence enables her tale to purvey a feminist discourse, advocating equality between men and women, a discourse deeply rooted in the concerns of the second half of the nineteenth century.

Mary Louisa Molesworth: The Independent Heroine

This is also the case of many of Mrs. Molesworth's fairy tales. Indeed, Mrs. Molesworth's tales frequently deal with gender issues and, just like George MacDonald's fairy tales, underline the complementary nature of men and women. Unlike MacDonald, however, Mrs. Molesworth often endowed her heroines with masculine qualities, the better to blur gender boundaries. Throughout her literary career, Mary Louisa Stewart Molesworth (1839–1921) published no less than a hundred works, ranging from realistic stories to fantasies. Her most famous fantasies are undoubtedly *The Cuckoo Clock* (1877) and *The Tapestry Room* (1879). She often claimed that her writing had been influenced by her Scottish maternal grandmother, whom she visited annually between 1841 and 1848 and who told her many stories, among them "The Brown Bull of Norrowa." In fact, though this story is in the vein of "Beauty and the Beast" and other animal bridegroom tales, "The Brown Bull of Norrowa" strongly recalls the oral tradition of the old wives' tales. The story is a rewriting of a Scottish fairy tale. Several versions of the tale were reprinted in the nineteenth century, such as the one included in Andrew Lang's *The Blue Fairy Book* (1889) or in Joseph Jacobs's *More English Fairy Tales* (1894).[15]

Molesworth's Victorian rewriting of the Scottish fairy tale borrows both from the oral tradition and from more classical literary fairy tales. Indeed, if her plot seems very much influenced by the oral tradition through its focus on

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

a resourceful heroine, some of its motifs recall more classical fairy tales. As already suggested, most folktales feature active young women who are forced to go down the social ladder and work hard, but who bravely struggle to regain and assert their rights. As Tatar underlines, one of the main differences between Perrault's tales and those of the Brothers Grimm is that, unlike the characters of the Grimms, who sought to render "the authentic voice of the common people," Perrault's characters "are intensely aware of fashion' (*Hard Facts* 189). Though Tatar's study envisages fairy tales as representations of psychic realities, I would like to use her remark here to associate it with Zipes's definition of the civilizing process. As Zipes contends, Perrault's initial reworking of such folktales in his literary fairy tales changed heroines of the Cinderella type into submissive and industrious female characters who owe their rescue by fairy godmothers and princes to their good manners. Though leagues away from the vain coquette, Cinderella is nonetheless "clothed in a baroque manner" and wears a—necessarily—fragile and delicate glass slipper, which securely confines her in a passive role by limiting her freedom of action (Zipes, *Fairy Tales* 30). The role played by clothing in the passage from the active folktale heroine to the passive fairy-tale heroine is indeed revealing of the way bourgeois mores and norms redefined the feminine ideal according to the demands of patriarchal ideology. Significantly, Molesworth also plays with her heroine's physical appearance and good manners. But like Ritchie's Belinda, who used her dresses to make curtains, Molesworth does not merely show how important it is for women to dress and speak well. On the contrary, Molesworth's construction of her heroine is highly modern: although her heroine departs from ideal Victorian passivity, she knows that her dresses will set her to advantage; although her heroine has agency, she retains her good manners. Indeed, neither vain nor proud, Molesworth's princess is active and talented, witty and clever, and enjoys competing to win her prince back.

"The Brown Bull of Norrowa" is an embedded story in *The Tapestry Room.* As the male and female characters, Jeanne and Hugh, enter the fantasy world behind the tapestry of the old tapestry room, they discover stories. "The Brown Bull of Norrowa" is told by a white-haired lady who is busily spinning and who invites them to hear one of the stories that she spins. It is presented as a very old fairy story that the lady used to spin for Jeanne's great-great-grandmothers. That Molesworth refuses to write a revision of "Sleeping Beauty," extolling female passivity, is clear from the very first lines: "No evil wishes [have] been breathed over her [princess's] cradle" (141–42). Instead of beauty and virtue, the princess is given three golden balls and learns to catch them "as an Indian juggler" (142). The motif of the golden balls recalls the Grimm Brothers' "The Frog Prince," a variation on the animal bridegroom tale in which a frog helps a young girl to recover the ball she has dropped down a well, pro-

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

vided she takes him home with her, lets him eat with her and sleep with her. In contrast to the Grimms' fairy tale, not only does Molesworth's princess keep her balls throughout the tale, but she also never drops them. The motif of the balls, as a symbol of the princess's own virginity, which she wants to preserve before mating with the prince,[16] enhances Molesworth's feminist stance. Having balls and keeping them becomes a sign of independence and autonomy, a means of exhibiting oneself and competing on the marriage market with other female jugglers.

"The Brown Bull of Norrowa" relates the story of an obedient, sympathizing, and courageous princess who sacrifices herself to a bull who has asked the king to give his daughter to him in marriage. After traveling on the bull's back, she wakes up in a beautiful room.

> She was lying on a couch . . . of the richest and softest silk. . . . [N]one of her rooms in her old home were so beautiful as this one where she found herself. . . . The loveliest flowers were trained against the walls, here and there fountains of delicately scented waters refreshed the air, the floor was covered with carpets of the richest hues and softest texture. There were birds singing among the flowers, gold and silver fish sporting in the marble basins—it was a perfect fairy's bower. (166–67)

As in Ritchie's rewriting, the presentation of fairyland in materialistic terms constructs the princess's union with the prince as a social rise, while the discovery of her new household strengthens her transformation into a housekeeper. Anxieties related to appearances and manners emerge as soon as she finds the table laid for two and invites the bull to join her for dinner. Instead of the beast she had expected, a young prince appears, "dressed, of course, to perfection" (Molesworth, "Brown Bull" 168), making the princess ashamed of her plain dress. Molesworth's revision of the animal bridegroom motif firmly locates her tale in the "civilizing" tradition of Victorian retellings. Far from the uncivilized brute that Beauty must domesticate, her bull is a well-dressed and well-mannered gentleman who provides his princess with "dresses, each more lovely than the others; shoes of silk and satin, exquisitively embroidered to suit her various costumes; laces and shawls, ribbons and feathers, and jewels of every conceivable kind" (173). Together with the materials for painting and for embroidery or the books in every language, the clothes and other accessories pave the way for the heroine's passage from a young girl to a well-accomplished bourgeois lady who learns how to rule her household. Revealingly, the princess finds it interesting "for the first time in her life to have to choose for herself" (173), thus turning the tools of feminine construction into

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

a means of asserting her autonomy. For the princess's power is furthered every evening as she frees the prince from the spell he is under by inviting him to sit at her table.

Molesworth's mixing of gender roles increases throughout the narrative. If the Beast in classical fairy tales is generally featured as a victim (of an evil female fairy), he is here constructed as "a valuable prize" (Molesworth, "Brown Bull" 178) and hunted for his hide—recalling the monetary value attached to traditional princesses. The princess, for her part, has no patience and wishes his hideous skin were burned to cinders—which sends the prince away and launches her search for her husband. When her palace vanishes, she is left with only her black dress, her golden balls, and her wit to start on her journey in order to "conquer the evil powers that are against [her] poor prince" (182). Looking very much like many of Perrault's *male* characters, Molesworth's princess inverts gender stereotypes through her various trials. Like an experienced mountaineer, she climbs to the top of the hill of ice with a stick, which changes into a ladder;[17] like a talented skater, she glides on the sea of glass with wooden shoes, which turn into skates. Hence, her appearance matters far less than her physical endurance and feats. A stick and wooden shoes have replaced the princess's ball dress. With scratches and blisters on her feet, a torn and draggled dress, Molesworth's princess demonstrates masculine and feminine qualities: for despite her physical appearance, she retains "her pretty way of speaking and gentle manners" (187), washes her face and combs her hair.

Molesworth's princess, like Psyche, successfully endures the trials. Her journey up the mountain on the ladder is not a journey into the underworld but down the social ladder. Interestingly, like Cinderella, the princess wishes for a prettier dress in order to attend the prince's marriage, which is to take place on the day she arrives in town. The prince will marry not the young woman whose foot fits the glass slipper but the princess who can catch three golden balls at a time. Through this last ordeal, Molesworth gives a subversive twist to the conventional tales where heroines remain in the background, patiently waiting for the prince to find the true princess. Three princesses, one from the south, another from the east, and the last from the west, sure of their attractions, take the test. The many spectators, the sound of the trumpet announcing the arrival of the princesses, and their taking place on the dais turns the scene into an exhibition of female beauties. However, despite their confidence in their beauty, the three princesses fail to catch the balls the prince throws at them. In contrast, the courageous princess, cracking the magic nut she had saved, appears in a fairy robe of spotless white and uses her skills at juggling to reveal herself as the true princess. Although the ultimate resorting to magic deals with female appearance, the cultivation of beauty is not the message of the tale:

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Molesworth's female juggler is a talented performer who earns her prince by stepping into the public sphere and exhibiting her skills. Undoubtedly marked by the sociopolitical environment, "The Brown Bull of Norrowa" features a feminine but independent heroine who can travel the world alone to save her prince. Indeed, published a decade after Ritchie's "Beauty and the Beast," Molesworth's fairy tale seems to resonate with late-Victorian claims to women's emancipation.

As these three fairy tales about bestial lovers by Ritchie, Ewing, and Molesworth demonstrate, Victorian updatings of folktales and classical fairy tales gradually cast the Beast into the background in order to shift the focus onto the heroine's wit and skills. Increasingly, the fear of the Beast, of animality and sexuality, are erased. Victorian Beasts are no longer hairy predators. On the contrary, the heroines' confrontation with male creatures becomes a means of asserting female autonomy and inverting gender roles and expectations. As a consequence, the revisions and transformations of the motifs and plot patterns of classical literary fairy tales serve to question and subvert the dominant socialization discourse meant to be internalized by children and adults through the fairy-tale reading experience. In so doing, they prompt their readers to be alert to the patriarchal interests that lurk beneath innocent-looking fairy tales, like wolves ready to eat little girls when they wander off the tracks of propriety.

Notes

I would like to thank the two anonymous readers of *Marvels & Tales* for their comments, which helped improve earlier drafts of this paper. Above all, I wish to express my deep thanks to Jack Zipes for his constant help and generous advice as well as for his kindness and encouragement.

1. Though Hearne acknowledges that sociohistorical context does influence fairy tales, her study of "Beauty and the Beast" in *Beauty and the Beast: Visions and Revisions of an Old Tale* examines the features that typify the tale beyond context.
2. As Gillian Avery highlights, d'Aulnoy's fairy tales were popular in England: "D'Aulnoy was . . . probably the first fairy-tale writer that many English young ladies encountered, her high-flown narratives with their emphasis on courtly mores being more acceptable to mother and governesses than the Perrault tales" (146).
3. By "matriarchal mythology" or "matriarchal tradition," I mean the type of matriarchal discourse that was traced in oral folktales by feminist studies examining the figure of the tale-teller, such as Marina Warner's *From the Beast to the Blonde,* which foregrounds the evolution of the fairy tale from old women's stories to a more masculine discourse, typified by Perrault's rewritings of folktales, for instance. Of course, I am not suggesting that the oral discourse in folktales was always feminine; moreover, I am also aware that there was a literary feminine tradition as well, as exemplified by the French fairy-tale writers of the end of the

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

seventeenth century (Mlle Lhéritier, Catherine Bernard, Madame Murat, Mlle de la Force, or Mme d'Aulnoy), who did not belong to the literary establishment.

4. It may be significant to add that most of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century revisions were by women writers who had experienced the beastly nature of marriage. Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy's variations on Apuleius's "Eros and Psyche"—especially in "The Ram" (1721) and "The Green Serpent" (1697), in which the heroine literally reads the tale of "Eros and Psyche" embedded in the frame narrative—have long been seen as lightly veiled protests against women's predicament in a male-dominated society. Forced to marry the Baron d'Aulnoy when she was fifteen, Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy used the fairy tale as a literary instrument to encode women's fears of forced marriages and the world of violence that women had to endure in seventeenth-century France. Likewise, Leprince de Beaumont was not just a French governess settled in London; she had also experienced an arranged marriage to a libertine, which had been annulled after two years.
5. The definition and nature of the "gentleman" was very much discussed in the 1860s, both in fiction and nonfiction. Charles Dickens's bildungsroman, *Great Expectations* (1860–1861), drew upon Pip's belief that the gentleman was a set of visual codes. Samuel Smiles's *Self Help* (1859), on the other hand, insisted on the gentleman's moral qualities, especially his benevolence toward his social inferiors and family. Smiles insisted on the importance of education to teach children that the gentleman did not depend upon the ownership of property. In the field of fairy tales, Jean Ingelow's "The Moorish Gold," included in *Stories Told to a Child* (1865), figured a footman who discovers the long hidden legendary Moorish gold and refuses to share the gold with his family and friends. With the money he intends to become a gentleman and change his name, but he is soon punished for his love of possessions.
6. Mourao gives the example of "Da Capo," published in *Miss Williamson's Divagations* (London: Smith, Elder, 1881), a sequel to "Sola," published in *To Esther and Other Sketches* (London: Smith, Elder, 1869).
7. It must be noted here that though many fairy tales are generally written expressly for children, the tales are nonetheless more often than not written with adults in mind. As Zipes underlines, "[T]he distribution of children's books has always depended first on the reception they receive by publishers, educators, librarians, and parents" (*Trials* 50).
8. Anne Thackeray Ritchie, "Bluebeard's Keys," *Cornhill Magazine,* Part 1, 23 (Feb. 1871), 192–220; Part 2, 23 (June 1871), 688–709; "Riquet à la Houppe," *Cornhill Magazine,* Part 1, 25 (Jan. 1872), 45–59; Part 2, 25 (Feb. 1872), 177–95. Both short stories were reprinted in *Bluebeard's Keys and Other Stories* (London: Smith, Elder, 1874), 1–118, 119–97.
9. "Beauty and the Beast" was first published in *Cornhill Magazine* 15 (June 1867), 676–709.
10. Conduct books often incriminated fashion as a foil to woman's moral beauty. As Mrs. Ellis has it:

> No; it is fashion, the tyrant-mistress upon whose service they have entered, who calls upon them to be dressed in the appointed livery with all her slaves; and thus they wring a father's heart with sorrow, perhaps deprive him

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

> of the necessary comforts of old age; or they send away unpaid a poor and honest tradesman, because they cannot, "absolutely cannot," appear in company with an unfashionable dress . . . Fashion is an enemy, because she has incited them to much evil, and to no good. She is an enemy, because when they sink into poverty or distress, led on by her instigation, she immediately forsakes, and leaves them to their fate. Fashion never yet was on the side of suffering, of sorrow, or of want. Her favourite subjects are the successful, the arrogant, the vain glorious; the objects of her contempts are the humble, the afflicted, and the poor (Ellis 283–85).

11. My analysis here is therefore positioned poles apart from Zipes's interpretation of Ritchie's rewritings of fairy tales. His view on Ritchie's "Little Red Riding Hood," for instance, is that the tale exemplifies "the manner in which women writers of the nineteenth century contributed to their own oppression and circumscription" (*Trials* 48).
12. Though both are classified as tale type 425 (The Search for the Lost Husband), according to the standard classification scheme developed by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, the construction of the heroines in "Eros and Psyche" (type 425A) and in "Beauty and the Beast" (425C) are sharply contrasted. Apuleius's "Eros and Psyche" was written in the middle of the second century A.D. and included in the novel *The Golden Ass*. Though literary, the tale is based on folklore. As Hearne explains, "'Eros and Psyche' was published in France by 1648 and disseminated through La Fontaine's 'Amours de Psyché et Cupidon' in 1669 and *Psyché, a tragedie-ballet* with text by Molière, Quinault, Corneille and music by Lulli (1670)" (13). The tale relates the story of Psyche, whom the jealous Venus has forced to marry her son. Psyche lives in luxury in Eros's castle; Eros visits her at night to make love to her in the dark on the condition that she does not look at him. Psyche's envious sisters encourage her to believe that she is married to a monster, and Psyche lights her lamp one night and looks at Eros, who is in fact a beautiful young man. Unfortunately, she drops hot oil on his shoulder. Eros wakes up and flies away in wrath. To find him, Psyche must work obediently at four tasks devised by Venus until she is eventually rescued by Eros, who persuades his father, Zeus, to make her immortal. Obviously, if the tale is centered on the hardworking heroine, it barely foregrounds female agency: Psyche does not choose her fate; she is punished for not obeying the male and is finally saved by the male protagonist. By way of contrast, in "Beauty and the Beast," though Beauty has no task to perform, she remains active throughout, choosing to give herself to the Beast, becoming the mistress of the palace, and coming and going of her own free will while the Beast is condemned to wait for her to rescue him. As a result, Leprince de Beaumont's version, though highly conservative, harbored a potential for subversion. As we have seen in the case of Ritchie, this potential was explored by Victorian women writers who both endorsed the image of the self-abnegating feminine ideal and discreetly challenged it. On the other hand, more feminine—if not feminist—women writers of fairy tales appeared to find in "Eros and Psyche" a more appropriate narrative to overtly voice female autonomy and independence. This idea is best illustrated by Mrs. Molesworth's rewriting, as shall be seen.
13. Bluebeard is ugly, however, and his name literalizes his ugliness to some extent.

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

14. In "The Little Darner" an industrious little girl is led into the forbidden wood, which the ogre and his wife inhabit, by five jealous girls. Because she can darn the ogre's stockings, she manages to save the five little girls and have the ogre eat pigs instead, while the little girls return home by following the needles the little darner has left on the path to serve as a guide. The cautionary tale may hint at sexual initiation: it teaches curious little girls not to enter dangerous forests and to improve their domestic skills instead.
15. In "The Black Bull of Norroway" a woman's three daughters go off to seek their fortune. A witch tells one of the daughters that she is doomed to be carried away by a bull. Reluctantly—yet submissively—the daughter goes off with the monstrous bridegroom. In each of the castles she visits along her journey she is given an apple, a pear, and a plum. She is then left alone in a dark den and must sit still. But she moves when she hears that the bull has won his fight with the devil; the bull thus cannot return, and she must look for it. As she starts her "search for the lost husband," she must climb a glass hill and spend seven years serving a blacksmith before she can obtain the iron shoes that will enable her to climb the hill. For her second task a washerwoman asks her to wash bloody shirts. She successfully performs her tasks, but the washerwoman's daughter claims *she* has washed the shirts and is chosen by the bull, who has now recovered a human appearance. The heroine promises the daughter her apple if she puts off the wedding by a day and lets her sleep in the prince's room at night. The daughter agrees but gives the prince a sleeping drink, which prevents him from hearing the heroine's story. He sleeps again on the second night. But on the third, he refuses to drink and is awake to hear the truth. The daughter and her mother are burned, and the prince marries the heroine.

    Likewise, "The Red Bull of Norroway" figures a king who has three daughters. The first one wishes to marry a king, the second a prince or a duke, while the third one would be content with the Red Bull of Norroway. When the latter comes bellowing at the door of the palace, the king and queen send their servants and their elder daughters in vain. Eventually they give their youngest daughter to the bull. The daughter pulls out a pin sticking in the bull's hide, which gives the bull his human appearance again, but the beautiful prince soon disappears and the heroine must look for him. An old woman gives her three nuts, which she is to break open only when her heart is about to break. As she sees the prince on the point of marrying a beautiful lady, she breaks open the nuts. The nuts contain objects that she offers the lady on condition that the lady will put off the wedding by a day and let the heroine spend the night in the prince's room. The heroine sings to the prince on the first and second nights, but the prince, who has taken a sleeping draught, cannot hear her. On the third night, he takes no sleeping draught and can hear her story.
16. I am indebted to Jack Zipes for drawing my attention to this point.
17. This may also hint at the Brothers Grimm's "The Raven," in which the hero must rescue the princess in a castle situated on a glass mountain, a tale that Molesworth cites and rewrites in "The Story of a King's Daughter," a fairy tale embedded in *Christmas-Tree Land* (1884).

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Works Cited

Aarne, Antti. *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography.* Trans. and rev. by Stith Thompson. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1961.

Andersen, Hans Christian. *Wonderful Stories for Children.* Trans. Mary Howitt. London: Chapman and Hall, 1846.

Apuleius. *The Golden Ass.* Trans. W. Adlington. London: David Nutt, 1893.

Auerbach, Nina. *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1982.

Aulnoy, Marie-Catherine d'. *A Collection of Novels and Tales of the Fairies.* 5th ed. London: J. Brotherton, 1766.

———. *Contes de fées; suivis de Contes nouveaux, ou, Les fées à la mode.* 1698. Ed. Nadine Jasmin. Paris: Champion, 2004.

Avery, Gillian. "Written for Children: Two Eighteenth-Century English Fairy Tales." *Marvels and Tales* 16.2 (2002): 143–55.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales.* New York: Knopf, 1976.

Breward, Christopher. *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion, and City Life, 1860–1914.* Manchester: Manchester UP, 1999.

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* 1865. *The Annotated Alice,* ed. Martin Gardner. 1960. London: Penguin, 2001.

Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations.* 1861. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993.

Ellis, Mrs. *The Daughters of England: Their Position in Society, Character, and Responsibility.* 1842. London: Fisher, 1845.

Ewing, Juliana Horatia. "Amelia and the Dwarfs." 1870. *Forbidden Journeys: Fairy Tales and Fantasies by Victorian Women Writers.* Ed. Nina Auerbach and U. C. Knoepflmacher. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992. 105–27.

———. *The Brownies and Other Tales.* 1870. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1871.

———. "Christmas Crackers" [1869–1870]. *Forbidden Journeys: Fairy Tales and Fantasies by Victorian Women Writers.* Ed. Nina Auerbach and U. C. Knoepflmacher. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992. 145–63.

——— "The Little Darner." *Old-Fashioned* [1882] 115–24.

———. *Lob Lie-by-the-Fire, and Other Tales.* 1873. New York: Oxford UP, 1937.

———. *Mrs. Overtheway's Remembrances.* London, 1869.

———. "The Ogre Courting" [1871]. *Old-Fashioned* 57–66.

———. *Old-Fashioned Fairy Tales: Brothers of Pity and Other Tales of Beasts and Men.* 1882. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1894.

Gatty, H. K. F. "Juliana Horatia Ewing." *Aunt Judy's Annual Volume.* London: Hatchards, 1885. 534–52, 577–95, 682–701, 737–50.

Gatty, Margaret. *Aunt Judy's Letters.* London, 1862.

Gérin, *Anne Thackeray Ritchie: A Biography.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981.

Hearne, Betsy. *Beauty and the Beast: Visions and Revisions of an Old Tale.* Chicago: U Chicago P, 1989.

Ingelow, Jean. "The Moorish Gold." *Stories Told to a Child.* 1865. London: Wells, Gardner, Darton, 1892. 194–216.

Jacobs, Joseph. *More English Fairy Tales.* 1893. London: D. Nutt, 1894.

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Knoepflmacher, U. C. *Ventures into Childland: Victorians, Fairy Tales, and Femininity.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998.

Lang, Andrew. *The Blue Fairy Book.* London: Longmans, 1889.

Leprince de Beaumont, Jeanne-Marie. *The Young Ladies Magazine; or, Dialogues between a Discreet Governess and Several Young Ladies of the First Rank under her Education.* London: J. Nourse, 1760.

Lewis, Philip. *Seeing through the Mother Goose Tales: Visual Turns in the Writings of Charles Perrault.* Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1996.

Loeb, Lori Anne. *Consuming Angels: Advertising and Victorian Women.* New York: Oxford UP, 1994.

MacDonald, George. *The Complete Fairy Tales.* Ed. U. C. Knoepflmacher. London: Penguin, 1999.

Meyer, Susan E. *A Treasury of the Great Children's Book Illustrators.* New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1983.

Molesworth, Mary Louisa. "The Brown Bull of Norrowa." *The Tapestry Room.* 1877. London: Macmillan, 1879. 135–96.

———. *Christmas-Tree Land.* London: Macmillan, 1884.

———. *The Cuckoo Clock.* 1877. London, Macmillan, 1980.

Mourao, Manuela. "Delicate Balances: Gender and Power in Anne Thackeray Ritchie's Non-Fiction." *Women's Writing* 4.1 (1997): 73–89.

———. "Negotiating Victorian Feminism: Anne Thackeray Ritchie's Short Fiction." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 20.1 (2001): 57–75.

Palgrave, Francis Turner. *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language.* London: Collins' Clear-Type Press, 1861.

Perrault, Charles. *Histoires ou contes du temps passé, avec des moralitez.* 1697. Amsterdam, 1698.

Ritchie, Anne Thackeray. "Beauty and the Beast." 1867. *Five Old Friends and a Young Prince.* London: Smith, Elder, 1868. 79–150.

———. *Bluebeard's Keys and Other Stories.* London: Smith, Elder, 1874.

———. *A Book of Sibyls: Mrs. Barbauld, Miss Edgeworth, Mrs. Opie, Miss Austen.* Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1883.

———, ed. *The Fairy Tales of Madame d'Aulnoy.* London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1892.

———. *Miss Williamson's Divagations.* London: Smith, Elder, 1881.

———. *To Esther and Other Sketches.* London: Smith, Elder, 1869.

———. *Toilers and Spinsters, and Other Essays.* 1874.

Rossetti, Christina. *Speaking Likenesses.* 1874. *Poems and Prose.* Ed. Jan Marsh. 1994. London: Everyman, 2001. 325–52.

Smiles, Samuel. *Self Help.* 1859. London: John Murray, 1862.

Talairach-Vielmas, Laurence. *Moulding the Female Body in Victorian Fairy Tales and Sensation Novels.* Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007.

Tatar, Maria. *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1987.

———. *Off with Their Heads! Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1992.

Thompson, Stith. *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-books, and Local Legends.* 6 vols. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1956.

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Villeneuve, Mme de. *La jeune amériquaine, et les contes marins.* La Haye, France: Aux dépends de la Compagnie, 1740.

Warner, Marina. *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers.* 1994. London: Vintage, 1995.

Zipes, Jack. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization.* New York: Routledge, 1983.

———, ed. *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood.* 2nd ed. New York and London: Routledge, 1993.

———. *Victorian Fairy Tales: The Revolt of the Fairies and Elves.* London: Routledge, 1987.

———. *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre.* New York: Routledge, 2006.

This content downloaded from
63.233.192.60 on Thu, 31 Mar 2022 15:41:28 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms